

Incorporating Literacy Into Out of School Time Programs

United Way's Out of School Time Literacy Initiative

Literacy: reading and writing for understanding and to extend meaning

After you complete or read over a lesson plan ask yourself: *Is there any way I can incorporate reading and writing into this activity?*

A perfect opportunity to incorporate literacy is at the beginning of the session. Building background knowledge will make the activity more meaningful. Establishing what youth already know at the beginning of a session will provide an easy way to gauge if they have learned something by the end of the lesson.

Strategies for incorporating literacy:

Read Aloud - build background knowledge for youth by reading aloud about the material you are going to cover in the activity. Ask questions before, during, and after reading. Consider short fiction or nonfiction texts. If the kids are working independently during the activity, consider reading aloud to them then. This works especially well for art, crafts, or building things.

Shared Reading - the staff member and group read the same text together (everyone has a copy of or can see the text)

- Group members take turns reading and staff helps pronounce difficult words: this is a strategy that many will feel comfortable with. However, it is very important to make sure youth are engaged for the entirety of reading time. The staff member should make sure everyone is following along the whole time, not just when it is their turn to read.
- Echo read: the staff member reads a sentence and the group echos the same sentence. This process is more time consuming but helps build fluency.
- Choral read: the staff member and youth all read together with the staff member speaking loudly enough to set the pace.

Shared Writing - staff and group write together about a topic. Staff write or students take turns writing ideas on a board or chart paper. This can be done to define important words, make predictions, draw conclusions, or share reactions. If shared writing is pertinent to other activities create a poster and hang it on the wall. This will contribute to

a print rich environment.

Reflection - youth reflect on their reaction to the lesson, how it relates to their lives, how they will use (or not use) what they learned. This could be a few sentences or longer. Encourage the kids to have reasons for why they felt a way.

Extension - challenge youth to use reading and writing in a creative way.

- For young kids who may be drawing a picture about something they learned/saw/did, have them label or caption their picture. Have them verbally explain what they drew or wrote if they do not have the skills to write an explanation.
- Have kids take a side of an argument and write about it. Should everyone know how to be able to do the activity? Why or Why not?
- Write stories, poems, songs, or raps about the activity that was done, to reinforce a concept, or to go over the rules. Reread these multiple times. Rereading reinforces the material and builds fluency.

Any time you read to the youth or you read something together, *ask questions!* Just reading aloud is not enough. Make sure they understand by engaging them in conversation. Clarify the text and ask what they think. Get them talking about what they read!

If youth are struggling with a concept, represent the concept in different ways. Reading and writing are ways to represent an idea differently.

REMEMBER: After you complete or read over a lesson plan ask yourself: *Is there any way I can incorporate reading and writing into this activity?*

Subject:	Ideas for Literacy Integration:
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Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a poster of the scientific method • introduce the experiments with a non fiction text explaining the experiment • have youth write down their observations then draw a conclusion • after the experiment write persuasive pieces on why or why not the experiment should be done again in future years • creatively write a story about what would happen if something went horribly wrong with the experiment
Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support a print rich environment by making posters of the rules of commonly played games • play warm up games in which youth have to use literacy • have the kids create a map of an obstacle course then write directions and actually complete it
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build background knowledge by reading about a famous artist • have youth write about their creations • introduce artist statements and have the kids write about the meaning behind their art
Character Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read excerpts from books or short stories with characters displaying the traits discussed and talk about cause and effect • have youth write about a character they know in a book, on tv, in a movie, or pop culture that displays the traits discussed and have them justify why they chose that person • do character webs of a person who exemplifies a certain trait
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use shared reading to introduce new health concepts • let kids have a say in what aspect of nutrition they learn about next by writing about why they should learn about a certain food group • persuasive writing that requires them to take a stand a justify their thinking, this could be a a few sentences or a paragraph • have youth create a poster about what they learn and hang it on the wall for a reference and to support a print rich environment